



# COPING WITH CHANGE

Living Well with Multiple Sclerosis



Imani, diagnosed in 2006



National  
Multiple Sclerosis  
Society

*Coping with Change* is one in a series of workbooks entitled *Living Well with MS*. This series is written for — and by — people who have been living with multiple sclerosis (MS) for some time. Please contact the National MS Society's MS Navigator® at 1-800-344-4867 (1-800-FIGHT-MS) for information about other workbooks in this series.

**Author:**

**Mary Elizabeth McNary, M.A., CRC**

Mary Elizabeth is a nationally certified rehabilitation counselor who has had MS for over twenty years. She serves part time as a counselor with the National MS Society in Washington, D.C. and spends the rest of each week doing special projects as a consultant from her home office. Elizabeth values the flexibility of this arrangement, which allows her to practice her profession at a pace that keeps her both professionally challenged and physically healthy.

**Editors:**

**Beverly Noyes, Ph.D.**

**Rosalind Kalb, Ph.D.,** National MS Society

**Doris Lill,** National MS Society

*The Society's mission is: We mobilize people and resources to drive research for a cure and to address the challenges of everyone affected by MS.*

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# INTRODUCTION

Change can be challenging and stressful, and MS has the potential to cause a variety of changes, both major and minor, for those of us who live with it. Some of these changes, such as impaired vision, poor balance or severe fatigue are a direct result of the disease itself. Others, such as the need to change the kind of work we do or the kind of house we live in, may result indirectly from the disease. Still other changes are those we choose to make in order to manage the illness more effectively, such as using a cane or motorized scooter, or taking a daily injection to slow disease progression.

One change can even lead to another. For example, a person who begins to experience severe fatigue and ambulation problems may decide to telecommute two days a week in order to conserve energy and maintain maximal productivity on the job. After telecommuting for a period of time, that person might decide to take courses in computer science in order to stay abreast of developments in the field. The computer science courses may then prove to be so interesting that the person decides to pursue a new career that could be conducted entirely from home.

The changes caused by MS can be negative or positive, sudden or gradual, permanent or temporary, predictable or unexpected. How to cope with MS-related changes comfortably and effectively is the subject of this workbook. Like other workbooks in the *Living Well* series, *Coping with Change* is designed to be used in a variety of ways: you can use it alone, as a guide for personal reflection and problem-solving, or as the basis of discussion with members of your family or your self-help group.

The workbook contains several types of exercises, some consisting of questions to be thought about or discussed, and others suggesting activities with which you can experiment. The objectives of this workbook are to:

- Help you people living with MS identify your attitudes towards the changes that the disease may have caused, either directly or indirectly
- Help you modify any attitudes that may be preventing you from coping effectively with the changes
- Teach you more positive ways to approach change and integrate it into your life
- Acquaint you with resources that might assist your efforts to cope with future changes

It is important to remember that the person who has MS may not be the only one who is “living” with the disease. Family members will also experience MS-related changes in their lives, and this workbook can help everyone in a family to recognize, discuss and manage the changes more comfortably. Although the changes specifically addressed in this workbook are those related to MS, *Coping with Change* seeks to provide you with skills to help you deal effectively with any kind of life change.

Because these objectives are neither simple nor easily-achieved, you should not expect to make your way through the workbook in an hour and be done with it. Rather, you might focus on a particular exercise over the course of a week, answering the questions on your own and then sharing them with family members or your self-help group. A self-help group, on the other hand, might decide to use this workbook to guide discussion over a period of several weeks, with each exercise being the focus of a single session.

Each person’s responses to the questions and ideas covered in this workbook will be slightly different, and no one’s will be right or wrong. By pooling their ideas, people are often able to identify options and problem-solving strategies they had not thought of on their own.

Keep in mind, as well, that there are resources available to help you deal with the complex issues and questions raised in this, or any other workbook, in the *Living Well* series. If you are using this workbook on your own and find that the questions and exercises are making you uncomfortable, you can contact the Society for referral to a self-help group or counselor in your area who is familiar with MS and the challenges it poses. There is no need to feel that you must cope alone. Thinking and talking about these issues in a supportive setting can be extremely helpful. If you are using this workbook in a self-help group and find that it raises issues you wish to address in greater depth, you might consider some individual counseling with a trained staff member of the Society or with a professional counselor.

# EXERCISE A

## How do you react to changes?

In order to see how you tend to cope with various types of change in your life, ask yourself the following questions (you might want to write down your answers or record them using a voice recorder so that you can refer back to them from time to time):

1. Do you become upset or anxious when your usual routine is interrupted by unforeseen events?  
 Never     Sometimes     Always
2. Do you feel very uncomfortable when something is very different from what you expected?  
 Never     Sometimes     Always
3. Do you ever feel that a particular event or change has “ruined everything?”  
 Never     Sometimes     Always
4. Do you cling to the belief that things “should” be a certain way, and feel frustrated or upset when they turn out differently?  
 Never     Sometimes     Always
5. Do you find it difficult to get used to changes even with the passage of time?  
 Never     Sometimes     Always

# EXERCISE B

## How do you react to MS-related change?

### How has life changed?

1. What are some changes that have occurred in your life, and in you personally, since your MS symptoms first began? How do you feel about them?

#### Negative changes:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Positive changes:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Some of these changes undoubtedly bother you more than others. Which ones bother you the most, and why?

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3. Have any changes that started out feeling very negative turned out to be positive? Is so, what made the difference?

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**How has life stayed the same?**

4. Think about the parts of yourself and your daily life that have not been changed by MS. These might include personal characteristics (a sense of humor, personal faith, love of music, etc.), important relationships, work/household activities, or overall priorities and goals that have remained constant. What has preserved them from change? Is there any action you could be taking to nurture and protect them for the future?

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**What benefits have you gained?**

5. Have you learned anything valuable from your experiences with MS?

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6. Could this learning be put to good use in other areas of your life as well? Try to think of some of areas in your life that could benefit from your MS-related learning.

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**What are your goals for the future?**

7. Have your goals (personal, social or occupational) changed since you started experiencing MS symptoms?

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8. Have you changed the ways you go about achieving your goals?

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## Discussion

The above questions were intended to make you think about the ways you have handled changes in your life, particularly those changes related to MS. The ability to cope skillfully and flexibly with change is an important tool for living well with MS, and there are several important strategies that you might find useful:

- ✓ Carefully examine the ways in which you tend to think about, and respond to, troubling changes in your life
- ✓ See if you can modify any unreasonable expectations or negative messages that you may be sending yourself about the changes
- ✓ Try to look for some positive meaning in the changes and challenges you are experiencing
- ✓ Allow yourself to grieve over the changes and losses that MS has brought into your life
- ✓ Try to identify any coping strategies you have used successfully in the past to deal with life's challenges, and think about how you might use those same strategies to deal with MS-related issues

## Let's consider Paul's experience

Paul was diagnosed with MS ten years ago, at the age of thirty. Despite a series of attacks over that decade, he did not experience any lasting functional impairment and always managed to fulfill his responsibilities at home and on the job with little difficulty. In spite of regular bouts of MS-related fatigue, Paul dealt with his MS as an inconvenience to be managed by living moderately, eating right and minimizing stress. Then, six months ago, Paul's wife gave birth to their first child. Paul discovered that a new baby can wreak havoc on a good night's sleep. His fatigue increased greatly and he recently began to experience double vision.

Paul is a successful editor at a technical publishing company, but the double vision and increased fatigue he is experiencing are making work very difficult. The fatigue makes it almost impossible for him to put in a full and productive day on the job; the double vision often prevents him from reading manuscripts or looking at a computer screen for any length of time. By the end of the workday, Paul is exhausted. He is beginning to doubt his own competence and worries that his professional identity is being threatened.

Paul's wife, Carol, is a busy attorney. She and Paul are committed to taking equal responsibility for their daughter and their household, so Paul feels guilty about coming home and collapsing at the end of each day. He wants to be able to fulfill his part of the bargain by doing his share of the household and childcare chores. He is anxious and irritated that it has suddenly become so hard for him to do so.

The MS-related changes that Paul is experiencing are causing him problems both at home and on the job. How can he cope effectively with these changes and the resulting problems? Let's examine the process by which Paul addressed his difficulties.

## **Step One: Assess the facts & list the physical changes**

At the suggestion of his self-help group leader, Paul asked himself what, exactly, had changed in his life over the past six months. He identified changes related to his MS, as well as other changes that had nothing at all to do with the illness. He came up with the following lists:

### **MS-related changes**

1. Started experiencing significant bouts of fatigue throughout the day
2. Began having double vision
3. Fatigue and double vision interfere with job performance
4. Fatigue interferes with family responsibilities at the end of the day

### **Life changes unrelated to MS**

1. The family is larger
2. The baby wakes up during the night
3. Chores and obligations around the house have increased

## EXERCISE C

### What changes have you experienced in the past six months?

Make a list — like Paul's — of the changes that have occurred in your life over the past six months. Separate changes caused by MS, such as variations in symptoms, from those that MS did not cause.

#### MS-related changes

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Non-MS-related changes

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## Step Two: Identify the thoughts & feelings related to life changes

Paul was feeling pretty miserable about his life. “I don’t understand what’s going on,” he kept thinking. “I have a wonderful wife, a healthy new baby, a great job ... I should be happy! What’s wrong with me?” Paul kept trying to figure out his situation. “Okay, so I have MS, but it isn’t so bad,” he thought. “I’ve managed fine so far. Everybody who has a child loses sleep at first. Everyone else seems to manage a job and family. How come this is so hard for me? I should be able to keep up with my work. I ought to be able to do my part at home, too.”

Paul thought more about his situation and realized how angry he was feeling. “It just isn’t fair that I should have to feel so weak and tired all the time,” he thought. “My eyes were perfect. Now there are times when I can’t even focus on a page. No wonder I feel like damaged goods! What could I possibly have done to deserve this?”

Paul shared some of these feelings with his self-help group. The group pointed out to him that some of the anger he was feeling might be related to the pressures he was putting on himself. They encouraged him to look at all the critical, negative messages he was sending himself about what he “should” be able to do. They also suggested that some of his ideas about what he “should” be able to do might be a bit unreasonable. Paul made some new lists. First he wrote down the negative thoughts that kept going through his mind. Then he noted how those negative thoughts made him feel. Here is what he came up with:

Beliefs	Feelings
“I shouldn’t feel tired all the time.”	Confusion, inadequacy
“I should feel happier.”	Confusion, guilt
“I am no longer as good as other people.”	Worthlessness, guilt, incompetence
“I should be able to do my work.”	Incompetence, worthlessness, guilt
“I must be healthy enough to do my part at home.”	Guilt, inadequacy
“I don’t deserve to have MS. It is not fair.”	Confusion, resentment, anger

When Paul finished compiling these lists, he realized that the beliefs he had about his current life situation did not seem very logical or reasonable. He also realized that what the group members were telling him might very well be true — that these unreasonable beliefs were causing him to feel very unhappy with himself and with his life. “I shouldn’t have to feel tired” is not a reasonable expectation for a man with MS-related fatigue and a new baby in the house. “I don’t deserve to have MS” a) implies that only those who deserve it come down with a disease like MS, and b) assumes that life should always be the way we want it to be.

Paul realized he could provide no evidence for either of these beliefs. He also recognized that statements like “I should be able to perform the way I used to at work” and “I must be able to do my part at home” ignored the very real changes that had occurred in his life over the past six months. Most important, perhaps, was the fact that his unreasonable beliefs left Paul no room to accommodate these changes.

# EXERCISE D

## How do you feel about the changes in your life?

Make a list of any negative or uncomfortable feelings you have about the changes you listed in *Exercise B*. After you have finished, see if you can identify the expectations or beliefs that may be causing you to feel the way you do about your current life situation. Examine this list to see if any of these beliefs or expectations are unrealistic or unreasonable — in the way that Paul's were. If you are not able come up with any evidence to justify them, you might decide that is time to abandon them.

### Negative or uncomfortable Feelings

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

### Beliefs & expectations

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## Step Three: Mourn the losses

As the members of Paul's self-help group shared their reactions to the challenges and changes they were each experiencing in their lives, Paul began to realize that each member of the group was involved in a kind of grieving process. Each person was seeking a way to deal with the fact that MS was taking its toll in one way or another — physically, emotionally or cognitively. In Paul's case, the MS-related fatigue and vision problems were interfering with his functioning at work and at home, and challenging his self-esteem. He was experiencing a sense of vulnerability that he had never felt before.

Such losses can give rise to grief and other negative feelings that are very understandable. It is normal — and necessary — to mourn the loss of anything that we value or enjoy, and Paul recognized that some of the feelings he was having were part of this natural grieving process.

MS is a highly unpredictable disease. A person's physical and mental capacities may change frequently over time. Because of the particular nature of MS, one must be prepared for both temporary and permanent losses as well as both temporary and permanent gains. Perhaps the biggest losses a person with MS must come to terms with are those of control and predictability. We cherish the illusion of being in control of our own lives, at least until something like MS comes along to shatter that illusion.

# EXERCISE E

## How do you cope with losses?

1. The most significant ability that I have lost to MS is:

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2. This loss makes me feel:

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3. I have taken the following actions as a result of the loss:

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4. From my experience of this loss, I have learned:

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5. I have coped with this loss by:

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## Step Four: Renegotiate (with self & others)

Paul decided that it would be more effective to accommodate the changes in his vision and energy level than to keep fighting them. He understood that to do so would involve renegotiating some of the expectations he had of himself, as well as the expectations held by his wife and his boss. In thinking about this process, Paul started to feel as though he was back on familiar ground. As he reviewed his past work experiences, Paul realized that one of his strengths was the ability to set reasonable goals and find ways to accomplish them. He had always had a knack for breaking large problems into smaller, more manageable ones. He also realized that he might need to begin communicating a bit more openly with the important people in his life about the feelings he was having. He and Carol had always worked through their problems and differences by talking about them openly. Perhaps they could cope with the challenges of MS in the same way.

The first step, renegotiating his own personal goals, was the most difficult one for Paul. Changing his own expectations felt initially like a lowering of his standards. He caught himself falling into the same illogical thinking addressed in *Exercise D*. With the help of his self-help group, however, he began to realize that to have different expectations for himself did not have to mean having lower expectations. Actually, he came up with some smarter expectations.

Paul's MS fatigue tended to be at its worst during the late afternoon. At work, he ran a short meeting with his editorial team each day at 3:00 p.m. For the last six months, he had not been an effective leader at those meetings, and he berated himself with the unproductive thought, "I should be able to run these meetings the way I always have." Paul renegotiated that expectation with himself and discovered that he could effectively hold the daily meeting at 9:30 in the morning, before the onset of MS fatigue. Indeed, the whole team was more productive in the morning, and Paul's supervisor happily accepted the new schedule. Paul understood that it was now more realistic to expect himself to perform effectively as a team leader in the morning, rather than in the late afternoon. He had not lowered his expectations of himself, he'd merely made an intelligent change in them. Because of the schedule change that resulted from this renegotiation, Paul now performed well at the morning meeting and used the afternoon for routine, less demanding tasks.

Paul and his wife, Carol, had made a commitment to dividing the household chores equally between them. For example, they each cooked dinner on alternate evenings. Over the past six months, however, MS fatigue had prevented Paul from fulfilling this obligation, and Carol was left doing all the cooking. Although his wife did not complain about the extra work, Paul was feeling guilty about being unable to fulfill the expectations that he set for himself and felt he should be able to meet. The guiltier he felt, the less he talked about it, and the more resentful Carol became.

Again, Paul renegotiated these expectations — first with himself and then with his wife. Together, Paul and Carol decided that Paul would prepare his share of the weekly dinners over the weekend and freeze them, so that all he had to do was pop dinner into the microwave on the evenings when it was his job to prepare it. Instead of having to work in a hot kitchen at the end of a long day, Paul would be able to relax before the evening meal. Carol thought this idea was such a good one that she started cooking many of her dinners over the weekend as well, and the couple enjoyed spending time together in the kitchen. Cooking became a hobby that they shared, rather than just a chore that they divided.

Finally, Paul considered the problem of doing the family's laundry. He and Carol had always divided this task equally by taking turns doing all the washing, drying, folding and putting away of the linen and clothing used during the past seven days. Lately, though, Paul was having a lot of difficulty with this task, because the heat in the laundry room exacerbated his symptoms and left him exhausted.

It was Carol who came up with the solution to this problem by renegotiating the division of the chore. She offered to do the washing and drying every week, if Paul would take responsibility for folding the laundry and putting it away. He would not have to spend any time in the heat generated by the washer and dryer. He could fold the laundry anywhere that he felt most comfortable in the house.

# EXERCISE F

## What is expected of you, by yourself and others?

Make a list of the expectations that you and the important people in your life hold for you. Have MS-related changes made it difficult to meet any of these expectations? Think about how you might renegotiate them. You may want to change the way you do a task in order to meet the expectations more effectively. Paul did this when he changed the times at which he prepared dinner and met with his editorial team.

Another option would be to change what is actually expected, as Paul did when he eliminated the washing and drying that was expected of him and replaced it by doing more folding and putting away. Think about the expectations that you could renegotiate to make life easier. Discuss your ideas with the family, friends, boss or teachers whose expectations you wish to meet. They will probably have some good ideas of their own.

### Your own expectations of yourself

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Other's expectations of you**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Make a note of the ways in which MS-related changes make it difficult for you to meet any of these expectations. Now, see if you can identify possible renegotiations of some or all of these expectations.

**Possible renegotiations**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Step Five: Re-examine your own perspective**

The members of Paul's self-help group started to examine their personal attitudes about MS and the challenges it posed for each of them more closely. In listening to one other, they focused almost exclusively on the ways in which they tended to feel defeated by the disease. They decided, instead, to try focusing on the positive, or proactive, steps that they could take to deal with the changes in their lives and feel better about themselves.

Paul decided to make an appointment with his physician to review his symptoms and find out if there were any treatments or interventions that would help him with his vision problems and fatigue. He continued to examine and re-examine his goals and expectations to ensure that they were reasonable and realistic. Doing so enabled him to take pleasure in his successes rather than feeling bombarded by failure. And Paul started a journal. "Nobody else can get through the days for me," he wrote, "so I'll do it the best way I can. If I have to be tired some or all of the time, then I will try to think of getting through each day as a success. I won't waste time and energy complaining, but neither will I minimize the challenge or be so critical of myself."

# EXERCISE G

## How do you cope with everyday challenges?

If you have not yet begun to keep a journal, you might want to start now (using a voice recorder if you prefer to think out-loud) to address the following questions:

1. What challenges do you face every day?

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2. How do you feel about these obstacles?

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3. What problem-solving or coping strategies have you utilized successfully in the past that could help you to handle the changes and challenges you are facing now?

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4. How do you think you could change your attitude toward your difficulties so that you could feel proud at the end of each day?

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5. Who are the people in your life for whom you try to live proudly (please include yourself in this list)?

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6. How might your spirituality (however you define it) help you cope with the challenges that you face?

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These questions require a lot of thought — and your thoughts about them may very well change from day to day. Keeping a journal can be a very effective way to “get a grip” on some of the feelings you are experiencing. You may find that the act of writing (or talking) something out privately helps you feel a bit more in control of the situation, and better able to think and problem-solve effectively. You may also find that keeping a journal raises issues that you would like to discuss with others — family members or friends, self-help group members or a professional counselor. However you choose to use it, this exercise could be the beginning of a process that lasts a lifetime.

# CONCLUSION

The goals of this workbook are to help you learn ways to cope more comfortably and effectively with the MS-related changes in your life. Since MS is a chronic, unpredictable disease that affects different people in different ways, no two individuals' experience with the disease will be the same. Whether the changes in your life are similar to, or different from, those experienced by Paul and his family you might want to try some of the strategies discussed in this workbook:

- Take the time to think about the MS-related changes in your life and your reactions to them. While allowing yourself to grieve over the changes you cannot control, see if you can identify any positive meaning in the challenges you are facing.
- Think about your goals and expectations and ask yourself whether you need to establish different, more realistic goals and expectations that reflect the physical or cognitive changes MS has caused. As you expend less energy “fighting” the changes, you will have more energy left for meeting the challenges ahead.
- Renegotiate your goals and expectations with yourself and other important people in your life.
- Allow yourself to feel pride and satisfaction in the achievement of your new goals. You have not lowered your standards or expectations; you have created different expectations to meet the demands of the illness.
- Make use of the full range of resources that are available to you. There is no need to manage the challenges of MS on your own. The Society can provide you with the names of counselors in your area with whom you can discuss the issues covered in this workbook.

# SUGGESTED READINGS & RESOURCES

## Books

- Coyle, P.K., & Halper, J. (2008). *Living with Progressive Multiple Sclerosis: Overcoming the Challenges*. Demos Health Publishing.
- Holland, N. & Halper, J. (2005). *Multiple Sclerosis: A Self-Care Guide to Wellness*. Demos Health Publishing.
- Holland, N., Murray, T.J., & Saunders, C. (2012). *Multiple Sclerosis: A Guide for the Newly Diagnosed*. Demos Health Publishing.
- Holland, N., Murray, T.J., Kalb, R. (2007). *Multiple Sclerosis for Dummies*. For Dummies Publishing.
- Kalb, R. (2005). *Multiple Sclerosis: A Guide for Families*. Demos Health Publishing.
- Kalb, R. (2011). *Multiple Sclerosis: The Questions You Have — The Answers You Need*. Demos Health Publishing.
- Kraft, G.H. & Catanzaro, M. (2000). *Living with Multiple Sclerosis: A Wellness Approach*. Demos Health Publishing.
- Kroll, K. & Klein, E.L. (2001). *Enabling Romance: A Guide to Love, Sex and Relationships for the Disabled (and the People who Care about Them)*. No Limits Communications.
- Meyer, M.M., & Derr, P. (2006). *The Comfort of Home, Multiple Sclerosis Edition: An Illustrated Step-by-Step Guide for Caregivers*. Demos Health Publishing.
- Mohr, D. (2010). *The Stress and Mood Management Program for Individuals With Multiple Sclerosis*. Oxford University Press.
- Paciorek, M.J. & Jones, J.A (2000). *Sports and Recreation for the Disabled: A Resource Handbook*. Cooper Publishing.
- Rogers, J (2005). *The Disabled Women's Guide to Pregnancy and Birth*. Demos Health Publishing.

Rosner, L.J. & Ross, S. (2008). *Multiple Sclerosis: New Hope and Practical Advice for People with MS and Their Families*. Touchstone Fireside Publishing.

Shadday, A. (2006). *MS and Your Feelings: Handling the Ups and Downs of Multiple Sclerosis*. Hunter House Publishing.

Schapiro, R.T. (2007). *Managing the Symptoms of Multiple Sclerosis*. Demos Health Publishing.

Schwarz, S.P (2006). *Multiple Sclerosis: 300 Tips for Making Life Easier*. Demos Health Publishing.

The National MS Society has an extensive library of resources about MS, including publications about symptom management and the day to day challenges of living with the disease. The publications listed below are available at [nationalMSsociety.org/brochures](http://nationalMSsociety.org/brochures) or 1-800-344-4867 (1-800-FIGHT-MS).

## Brochures

### Newly Diagnosed:

Living with MS

### Staying Well:

Multiple Sclerosis & Your Emotions

### Managing Specific Issues:

Depression & Multiple Sclerosis

MS & the Mind

Taming Stress in Multiple Sclerosis

**Managing Major Changes:**

PLAINTALK: A Booklet About MS for Families

A Guide for Caregivers

So You Have Progressive MS?

**For Children & Teenagers:**

Someone You Know Has MS: A Book for Families

When a Parent Has MS: A Teenager's Guide

**Online****Can Do Multiple Sclerosis Webinars**

**[mscando.org](http://mscando.org)**

**Live Fully Live Well**

**[nationalMSsociety.org/LiveFullyLiveWell](http://nationalMSsociety.org/LiveFullyLiveWell)**

**MS Learn Online Series**

**[nationalMSsociety.org/mslearnonline](http://nationalMSsociety.org/mslearnonline)**

**Multimedia Library: DVDs**

**[nationalMSsociety.org/DVDs](http://nationalMSsociety.org/DVDs)**

**Online Classes**

**[nationalMSsociety.org/onlineclasses](http://nationalMSsociety.org/onlineclasses)**

## **Agencies & Organizations**

### **ABLEDATA**

(800) 227-0216

**abledata.com**

### **Alliance for Technology Access**

(800) 914-3017

**ataccess.org**

### **American Foundation for the Blind (AFB)**

(800) 232-5463

**afb.org**

### **American Printing House for the Blind**

(800) 223-1839

**aph.org**

### **Can Do Multiple Sclerosis**

(800) 367-3101

**mscando.org**

### **Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (DREDF)**

(510) 644-2555

**dredf.org**

### **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**

(800) 669-4000; (800) 669-6820 (TTY)

**eeoc.gov**

**The Job Accommodation Network (JAN)**

(800) 526-7234

**askjan.org**

**National Association of the Deaf**

(301) 587-1788; (301)-587-1789 (TTY)

**nad.org**

**National Board of Certified Counselors**

(336) 547-0607

**nbcc.org**

**National Institute on Deafness & Other Communication Disorders**

(800) 241-1044; (800) 241-1055 (TTY)

**nidcd.nih.gov**

**National Institute on Disability & Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR)**

(202) 245-7640 (Voice/TTY)

**www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/nidrr/index.html**

**National Library Services for the Blind & Physically Handicapped**

(202) 707-5100; (202) 707-0744 (TTY)

**loc.gov/nls**

**National Rehabilitation Information Center (NARIC)**

(800) 346-2742; (301) 459-5984 (TTY)

**naric.com**

**President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities**

(202) 376-6200; (202) 376-6205 (TTY)  
**[access4911.org/president%27s\\_committee.htm](http://access4911.org/president%27s_committee.htm)**

**Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)**

(202) 245-7488  
**[www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/index.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/index.html)**

**Small Business Administration**

(800) 827-5722; (704) 344-6640 (TTY)  
**[sbaonline.sba.gov](http://sbaonline.sba.gov)**

**Social Security Administration Office of Disability**

(800) 772-1213; (800) 325-0778 (TTY)  
**[ssa.gov](http://ssa.gov)**

**Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc.**

(301) 563-9112; (301) 589-3006 (TTY)  
**[tdi-online.org](http://tdi-online.org)**





**The National MS Society is a collective of passionate individuals who want to do something about MS now — to move together toward a world free of multiple sclerosis.**

We help each person address the challenges of living with MS through our 50-state network of chapters. The Society helps people affected by MS by funding cutting-edge research, driving change through advocacy, facilitating professional education, and providing programs and services that help people with MS and their families move their lives forward.



**For more information:**

[nationalMSSociety.org](http://nationalMSSociety.org)

1-800-344-4867 (1-800-FIGHT-MS)